

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE JOURNALISTS

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April 24, 2002

Dear Journalist,

Covering the court beat can be a challenge, whether you're an experienced reporter, new to the beat, or assigned for a brief stint--possibly just one case. Several organizations in the journalism and legal fields have teamed up to sponsor a special, one-day program for court reporters and others who cover legal issues, including police reporters. We will cover many of the basics, such as how to cover federal courts and state judicial elections. We'll also bring you speakers and sources who will give you ideas for stories on cutting-edge subjects like community courts, drug courts, and the debate over online public access to court files. You'll have the chance to ask questions of judges, court experts, and fellow journalists who can help you do smarter coverage of this important beat. We'll provide you with written materials and source lists.

The program will be held on Thursday, May 30, in San Francisco, just one day before the annual national convention of Investigative Reporters & Editors, one of the sponsoring groups ([www.ire.org](http://www.ire.org)). The program was planned by Criminal Justice Journalists, a national group of reporters, writers, and editors in broadcast, print, and online media who cover crime and justice ([www.reporters.net/cjj](http://www.reporters.net/cjj)). Collaborating were the National Center for the Courts and Media of the National Judicial College, the Judicial Council of California, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

A list of speakers is enclosed. Registration is only \$50; to sign up, message John Green, [jgreen@spj.org](mailto:jgreen@spj.org), or call 573-882-2772. You may want to spend the weekend at the IRE convention, which will include programs on hot topics for reporters. Rooms at the convention hotel (\$169 single plus tax) are nearly exhausted, but check with the Hyatt Regency San Francisco, 5 Embarcadero Center, 415-788-1234 or 800-233-1234, by April 26. (Ask for the IRE room block.) You may also call the Grand Hyatt on Union Square, 345 Stockton Street, 415-398-1234 and ask for the IRE room block. The rate is \$139/single/double plus tax.

We hope to see you in San Francisco. If you have any questions, call Ted Gest, 202-296-8444, or message him at [tgest@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:tgest@sas.upenn.edu).

Sincerely,

Ted Gest,  
President  
Criminal Justice Journalists

# **Better Court Coverage**

## ***A one-day conference for journalists***



**Thursday, May 30, 2002—9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Hyatt Regency San Francisco, 5 Embarcadero  
Center**

Official Sponsors  
Criminal Justice Journalists  
Investigative Reporters and Editors

National Center for the Courts and Media, National Judicial College  
*in collaboration with*  
Judicial Council of California and  
United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit

### ***Topics***

Veteran jurists, journalists, attorneys, and other experts will discuss:

- **How to get more out of judges and their courts**
- **Online and in-person access to court files**  
How to get them, and what to do when criminal case files and civil settlements are sealed
- **Special challenges of covering federal courts**  
Is there any hope for camera access? How to decipher sentencing rules and death penalty appeals
- **How to cover “problem-solving” courts**  
Drug, domestic violence, mental health, prostitution, and community courts
- **Judging the judges**  
Coverage of elections, disciplinary actions, and conflicts of interest. When can judges talk?

### **Registration**

**\$50** for members of Criminal Justice Journalists (CJJ) and Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE)

To register, send message to **[jgreen@ire.org](mailto:jgreen@ire.org)** or call 573-882-2772. To join CJJ, see **[www.reporters.net/cjj](http://www.reporters.net/cjj)** or call 202-296-8444. To join IRE, see **[www.ire.org](http://www.ire.org)**. Check Web sites for hotel information.

**See a complete schedule of speakers and topics on reverse.**

## Schedule

**9:00–10:00 a.m. How to get more out of judges and their courts: Advice from a veteran jurist and journalists on high-profile and routine cases**

Judge Larry Paul Fidler, Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles  
Ted Gest, Criminal Justice Journalists  
Pam MacLean, *Los Angeles Daily Journal*

**10:15–11:30 a.m. Online and in-person access to court files: How to get them, and what to do when criminal case files and civil settlements are sealed**

Howard Mintz, *San Jose Mercury News*  
Alan Carlson, Justice Management Institute, Kensington, California  
James Chadwick, Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich, Palo Alto, California

**11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m. Special challenges of covering federal courts: Is there any hope for camera access? How to decipher sentencing rules and death penalty appeals**

Judge Robert S. Lasnik, United States District Court, Seattle  
Bob Egelko, *San Francisco Chronicle*  
Senior Judge Procter Hug, Jr., United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, Reno  
Judge W. Margaret McKeown, United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, San Diego  
Richard Wieking, Clerk, United States District Court, San Francisco

12:45–2:00 p.m.—Lunch on your own

**2:00–3:15 p.m. How to cover “problem-solving” courts: Drug, domestic violence, mental health, prostitution, and community courts**

Judge Darrell Stevens, Superior Court of California, County of Butte  
Greg Berman, Center for Court Innovation, New York  
Luciano Colonna, Harm Reduction Project, Salt Lake City

**3:30–5:00 p.m. Judging the judges: Coverage of elections, disciplinary actions, conflicts of interest. When can judges talk?**

Judge Ellen Rosenblum, Multnomah County, Oregon  
Professor Clark Kelso, McGeorge School of Law, Sacramento  
Raymond Marshall, McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen, San Francisco;  
Former President, State Bar of California  
Harriet Chiang, *San Francisco Chronicle*